



## General Assembly

Distr.: General  
22 February 2016

English only

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### Human Rights Council

Thirty-first session

Agenda item 3

Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development

**Joint written statement\* submitted by International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status, International-Lawyers.Org, Arab Organization for Human Rights, General Arab Women Federation, Indian Movement "Tupaj Amaru", International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Organisation Mondiale des associations pour l'éducation prénatale, Organisation pour la Communication en Afrique et de Promotion de la Coopération Economique Internationale - OCAPROCE Internationale, Union of Arab Jurists, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status, International Educational Development, Inc., World Peace Council, non-governmental organizations on the roster**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[16 February 2016]

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\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).



## **Economic, Social and Cultural rights in Iraq**

### **Abstract**

The aim of this statement is to review the deterioration of Economic, Social and Cultural rights of the Iraqi people as a result of the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the following Occupation.

The period of destruction of the Iraqi social welfare started in 1990 when the security council imposed punitive sanctions, that remained intact for thirteen years despite, their impact on innocent Iraqi civilians. The consequences of the sanctions were dramatic and can still be felt today in areas of health, education and the quality of public services provided.

Moreover the 2003 invasion lacked Security Council consent and hence is considered as a war of aggression. A war classified as a grave international crime.

We conclude that what we are witnessing in Iraq today is the consequence of the illegal war initiated by permanent members of the Security Council: principally the United States and the United Kingdom, which has devastated the country and produced the horrific social conditions and conflicts in Iraq of today.

### **Access to basic services**

Today 60% of Iraqi households suffer from substandard living conditions.

A Chronic food security situation is being fueled by conflict, prices are rising and inflation further threatens the real income of citizens.

In terms of water supply, the Iraqi society faces a lack of proper water source and a poorly maintained sewage system. Corruption is contributing to the problem and the whole delivery mechanism continues to be under-maintained.

Poor water quality facilitates, waterborne disease and the spread of illness affect Iraqi children, IDP's and refugees.

Scarcity of usable water threatens agriculture, industrial production and energy sector hence further increasing unemployment. Moreover, electricity provision is on the decline.

### **Health Care**

Health wise, annual healthcare budget plummeted to \$22 million, 5% of 1990's average. And access to health care is impossible for a huge part of the population. Plagued by corruption, money directed to the health system is being embezzled to offshore accounts and rapid senior and middle management changes left the system with no clear direction.

Military activity and conflict facilitates the destruction of health care facilities and roadblocks hinder the effectiveness of victim transport.

Today, a decade after the occupation of Iraq, many are left traumatized baring psychological issues. The Iraqi health system is unable to deal with such types of health problems and a mental health policy is non-existent.

The invasion and the following occupation resulted also in an environment catastrophe.

Contamination was detected in 350 sites. This led to high toxic levels of lead, mercury and depleted uranium pollution further, endangering the health state of many individuals; higher rates of birth defects in children following 2004 Fallujah attack 4-fold excess of infant mortality rate between 2005-2010. ,

Today, the Iraqi health care system remains low on medical professionals, equipment and pharmaceutical supplies all as a result of the unrest during the period previously mentioned.

### **Education**

After decades of sanctions and occupation followed by years of neglect, mismanagement and corruption the education system is left suffering. Literacy rates are declining and Iraq failed to achieve the education-for-all Millennium Development Goal by 2015. It is worth mentioning that prior to 1991 Iraq had the best educational system in the Middle East.

The Iraqi Government still ignores its duty under Article 13.2(e) of the ESC Covenant. The re-building of educational infrastructure has been neglected ever since it was initially destroyed by the wars.

Children suffer the most from the deterioration of education. In 2004, one thousand two hundred primary schools were closed for the use as shelters. UNESCO and UNICEF declared that 70% of educational infrastructure was damaged or neglected. Corruption and embezzlement further deepens the dilemma.

Direct attacks continue to be made against educators and staff, 479 professors were assassinated since 2003. The DeBathification policy forced top university personnel out of office. Furthermore, sectarian division and religious fundamentalism remains one of the reasons facilitating the awful degradation in the general quality of education.

#### **Women Rights**

Unfortunately, due to the occupation and the following unrest women literacy, employment and employment have plummeted. Article 3 of the Covenant is disregarded.

The professional status of some women subjected them to violence and other threats, since the 2003 invasion and the freedom of women mobility has been hindered. Domestic violence increased significantly and the WHO reported that one in five Iraqi women face household abuse.

Politically, female participation took a nose drop, the number of female MPs is at its lowest and not a single ministry is headed by a female. Taking into consideration Article 49.9 of Iraqi constitution.

On the other side, the occupation left many women widowed. This alongside social instability (lack of federal aid or humanitarian assistance) forced many women below the poverty line. The social stigma of being a single mother can be crippling within the Iraqi society forcing many women to seek prostitution as means of providing for their families.

The utter need for resources make single women more prone to trafficking networks and security force corruption facilitates it. Or in other cases, women are inserted into the pre-Islamic cultural practice of 'pleasure marriage'.

#### **Child Rights**

The complexity of the social platform reaches children; today the average child in Iraq is either missing out on adequate education or happens to be left traumatized from an incident or an orphan. The government does not fully abide with its obligations under Article 10.3 of the Covenant.

Child mortality is on the rise; treatable diseases continue to claim the life of children and account for over 30% of child deaths. The WHO reported lower immunization rates and increased shut down of child-health programs.

Many children suffer from PTSD or learning disabilities related to a lack of early stimulation and learning. In an attempt to ease their suffering many minors turn to narcotics.

Quite often, children are caught between cross fire and are forced to enlist as militant child soldiers.

It is our conclusion that the deterioration of the economic, social and cultural rights in Iraq are mainly a result of the 1991 war and sanctions, the 2003 war and the occupation that followed.

While those conditions, including accountability, need to be addressed by the Iraqi government the United Nations and the international community at large also have a responsibility to independently address the matter of accountability and justice for the people of Iraq in view of war and occupation.

**Therefore, we call on the United Nations Human Rights Council to:**

1. Appoint a Special Rapporteur to Iraq, to report on all human rights violations in Iraq.

2. To dispatch an independent, international investigation commission to thoroughly investigate all human rights violations in Iraq since 2003, and suggest the proper mean to address these violations and bring perpetrators to justice.

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The BRussels Tribunal, Arab Lawyers Association- UK, Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ), Association of Humanitarian Lawyers (AHL), The International League of Iraqi Academics (ILIA), The Iraqi Commission on Human Rights (ICHR), Women Will Association (WWA), Organization for Widows and Orphans (OWO), Ikraam Center for Human Rights, Belgian Peace Movement, Ligue camerounaise des droits de l'homme, International Coalition against War Criminals (ICAWC), Medical Aid for the Third World, Association of Iraqi Diplomats (AID), General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW), Association of Iraqi Intellectuals and Academics, The International Network of Arab Human Rights NGOs, The Perdana Global Peace Foundation, Kuala Lumpur Foundation to Criminalise War, Spanish Campaign against the Occupation and for Iraq Sovereignty- CEOSI, Arab Cause Solidarity Committee, Iraq Solidarity Association in Stockholm, Human Rights Defenders in Iraq (AHRDI), Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, The Iraqi Centre for Human Rights, Association, Organisation for Justice & Democracy in Iraq (OJDI), NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

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